(b) if so, the detailed special features of the system to track the rakes etc; and

(c) the cost of the plans worked out and their detailed phased implementation for extending them to all the Railway Divisions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. One core module has been made operational on Northern Railway since March, 2000. The System requires information about the rake to be fed once into the computer system at the time the rake enters the computerised territory, thereafter instant access to real time information about the rake, including its whereabouts, is available across the entire Northern Railway.

(c) Total cost of the project as sanctioned is Rs. 1098 crore for the entire Indian Railways. At present, two core modules are expected to be implemented across the Indian Railways by March, 2003 at an estimated cost of Rs. 465 Cr.

Vacant Posts for SCs / STs in Railways

†2928. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of posts reserved for Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes in the Railways lying vacant; and

(b) the details regarding how and when the vacant posts are proposed to be filled up?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) The number of posts reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes lying vacant in recruitment categories as on 01.01.2000 was as under:

	SC	ST
Group A	4	5
Group B	3	nil
Group C	1133	943
Group D	911	1566

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) Accrual of vacancies and filling of the same are continuous processes.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of Indira Sawhney Vs. Union of India held that the number of vacanies to be filled up on the basis of reservation in a year including carried-forward reservations should in no case exceed the limit of 50%. As per the existing recruitment rules, the total reservation for Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes in itself is 49.5%. As such, after 1996, no further Special Recruitment Drive could be undertaken to wipe out the carried-forward shortfall vacancies of SCs / STs / OBCs.

To overcome this difficulty, the Government have passed Constitution (Eighty First Amendment) Act 2000, following which necessary instructions have also been received from the Department of Personnel and Training (DOP&T) vide their Office Memorandum dated 20.7.2000. This Act lays down that the ceiling of 50% on filling up of reserved vacancies would apply only on the reserved vacancies which arise in the current year and the backlog / carried-forward vacancies would be treated as a separate block and would not be subject to any ceiling. Accordingly, vide Railway Board's letter dated 4.8.2000, all the Zonal Railways / Production Units etc. have been advised to undertake the review of backlog / carried-forward vacancies of SCs / STs and to take steps to clear the same. As announced in the Budget 2000-2001, special drive for filling in the backlog of SC / ST vacancies are being taken up.

Gauge Conversion of Rupsa-Bangripusi

2929. SHRI BIRABHADRA SINGH:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of funds allocated for conversion of Rupsa-Bangripusi narrow gauge line into broad gauge during the last three years;

(b) whether the Ministry has set any specific target for completion of the conversion; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to connect the said rail line with Tata Junction?